



# Kansas, Inc. Strategic Planning Executive Summary of Statewide Cell Information

Overview – The following is an Executive Summary of the information discussed at each of the Strategic Planning Cell meetings. This is designed to provide a brief overview of the main points discussed at each of the meetings.

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## Background Information

During December 2006, Kansas, Inc. kicked off its yearlong statewide economic development Strategic Planning process. Five months and several thousand miles later, the thoughts and opinions of many Kansans from various regions have been compiled. Over 160 participants with several hundred years of combined business and industry experience participated in 17 Cell meetings throughout Kansas. Participants included individuals of all ages and ranged from those who had lived and worked their whole lives in Kansas to those who had immigrated to Kansas from other states and countries.

In December 2006, the Statewide Steering Committee identified five areas of focus for the state economic development Strategic Plan. These included: workforce development, energy and natural resources, rural development, technology and innovation, and business and tax climate. Through the process of the first round of Statewide Cell meetings, several other themes within these areas also emerged, including bioscience, manufacturing, service industry, infrastructure, and state image.

The following Executive Summary has been categorized by Cell location in the ten areas mentioned above. Many of the areas and issues are intertwined. An effort was made to categorize each issue most true to the context in which they arose in the Cell meeting.

**Dodge City Cell Meeting – March 7, 2007 – Eddie Estes, Chair**

Participants: Eddie Estes, Kerri Baker, Jim Coffin, Jeff Pedersen, Vicky Scheve, Ed Elam, Joe Bogner, Dennis Zimmerman, Melissa McCoy, Bob Wetmore, Joann Knight

- Workforce Development
  - Character issues/values, quality of workforce
  - Unemployment too low
  - Immigration services
  - Technical education needs equitable funding
  - Support for Community College system
  - More emphasis on technical training at younger ages, helps retain young people
  - Technical education is a high priority for our rural areas
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Electrical distribution/grid upgrade
  - Alternative fuels
  - Continued support for research and development
  - More state support for competing in industry
  - Water issues; conservation and better use
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Better jobs to lure young people
  - A long-term state plan that doesn't change
  - Missing development professionals (skilled) at leadership levels
- Technology and Innovation
  - More rural cooperation with KDOT, KDHE, Kansas Water Board
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Current tax level burdensome, excessive
  - Limits our competitiveness in attracting new business, retaining existing
  - Need a totally new tax model
- Bioscience
  - Focus on agriculture with an ag bio-terrorism program

**El Dorado Cell Meeting – May 8, 2007 – Mark Utech, Chair**

Participants: Mark Utech, Jim Wilson, Becky Wolfe, Stephen Waite, Dan Demo, Dale Short, Steve Funk, Deborah Amend, David Sundgren, Ray Connell

- Workforce Development
  - Shortage of workers
  - Worker character, values, basic skills issues
  - If you provide training, employees leave for better opportunities
  - Finding healthcare workers, truck drivers, mechanics, auto body technicians is competitive
  - Signing bonuses are used in healthcare
  - Make it the employers responsibility to retain workers
  - Younger workers have a different mentality
  - Need to understand younger workers
  - Educate youth on technical careers
  - Increase leadership and training
  - Streamline education and meet business needs
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Electric utility infrastructure needs to expand
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - USDA grants difficult because of definitions and population requirements
  - Main Street program has worked well
  - Communities rely on their schools
  - Consolidation at the administrative level
  - Mobile population, there is no longer a “hometown”
  - Communities need to communicate better
- Technology and Innovation
  - Better Internet infrastructure needed
  - We need to think in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Business and Tax Climate
  - State incentives focus on new businesses, not existing businesses
  - Must learn to adapt to international business trends
  - Need fair and balanced tax structure to support businesses
  - Commercial property taxes are an issue
  - Recent tax exemptions (M&E, franchise) not enough
  - Industrial revenue bonds have worked
  - Health insurance a huge issue
  - Support local businesses
  - Fuel tax seems high
  - Need cap on property valuation
  - Regulation nickel and dimes businesses
- Manufacturing
  - Incentives are for manufacturing or commercial, but not both
- Service Industry
  - Informational services is the new industry
- Infrastructure
  - Power of eminent domain important for city growth
  - Need to grow from within
  - Need affordable housing
- Image
  - State image is a problem
  - Must market both El Dorado and Kansas
  - Individuals will retire here for cost of living, but don't necessarily help economic growth

## Emporia Cell Meeting – January 25, 2007 – Jerry Karr, Chair

Participants: Jerry Karr, Kent Heermann, Dale Davis, Fred S. Neuer, Mike Tovar, Dorine Harter, Richard Porter

- Workforce Development
  - Shortage of human resources
  - Mismatch between supply and demand
  - Technical colleges are a lifeline for businesses, we need to target technical colleges
  - Exporting graduates, retain what we have
  - Our workforce is aging and demographics are changing
  - Funding issues with educational institutions
  - Target workers at a younger age
  - Dropout rates in Emporia are high
  - Need to address education system failures
  - Possibly use lottery funds for education
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Alternative energy potential with wind and biofuels
  - Important to the region
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Address asset transfer to the next generation
  - As the population ages, they move closer to services
  - Rural growth has been slow
  - Consolidation, individuals like local control and use
  - Use economic development to stabilize communities
  - Issues are not unique to Kansas
- Technology and Innovation
  - Financial capital is available, but high interest rates are detrimental
  - Venture capital is a constraint
  - Distance learning may be improved as technology becomes more cost efficient
  - We need to be looking ahead to see what will work in the future
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Property taxes too high
  - There is an imbalance in current tax system
  - Look at bonuses, incentives to bring individuals to Kansas
  - Cheaper places than Kansas to start a business
  - Deficit spending getting worse
  - Use caution when adding incentives to certain jobs, they may never pay off
  - M & E exemption will help businesses and possibly increase tax base
  - Friendly competition is needed, but focus on the big picture
- Manufacturing
  - Need raw materials, markets, and human resources to survive
  - Can't compete against foreign labor costs
  - Need incentives to produce something different or something that can't be outsourced
- Service Industry
  - May be less costly to move individuals to areas where services already provided (healthcare)
- Infrastructure
  - Thinking in regards to infrastructure needs to be examined
  - Healthcare is important as population ages
  - Government consolidation efforts are difficult and political
  - Possible privatization of certain government services
  - Immigration is an issue and an opportunity
  - We need to look at education funding
  - What can we do to bring the people, dollars, and resources to Kansas
- Image
  - Kansas has a self-image problem
  - Once we get individuals here, they like it
  - State attitude needs to improve

**Garden City Cell Meeting – April 12 & 19, 2007 – Lon Pishny, Chair**

Participants: Lon Pishny, Paul Karkiainen, Jack Beery, Michelle Mayo, Dick Strandmark, Steve O'Brate, Neil Hawley, Lee Reeve, Von Hunn, Debbie Reynolds

- Workforce Development
  - Concern about aging workforce and decline in pool of qualified workers
  - Guest worker problems
  - Education must be business driven
  - Best teachers leaving education
  - Education must prepare students for the workplace
  - No Child Left Behind creating a generation of test takers
  - Challenge Federal rules and regulations that are detrimental to high quality public education
  - Soft skills are equally as important as educational competence
  - Need critical examination of how much is going into essential education
  - Low unemployment rate is a problem
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Eliminate roadblocks and encourage positive behavior
  - Incentives for recycling water
  - Educate and alter mindsets on conservation and proper use
  - Provide incentives for additional alternative energies
  - Concern about losing oil and gas revenues to outside interests
  - Finney County electric rates very high
  - Additional power plants would stimulate economic growth
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Different perceptions/strategies could be used from eastern/western Kansas regarding rural development
  - Opportunity to prosper, quality of life must be known
  - Identify our needs, build from within
  - Promote community involvement with immigrants
  - Community and regional collaboration
- Technology and Innovation
  - A means that must be utilized to achieve our desired ends
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Many immigrants don't file returns, sales tax must be more prominent
  - Government must provide incentives or assistance when businesses bring in employees
  - Raising wages just shifts employees
  - M & E exemption was helpful
  - Some legislative actions (gambling) may have negative long-term impact on business
  - Current regulatory environment and processes discourage businesses
  - Need more education of all stakeholders, including business and government
  - Encourage and develop entrepreneurs
  - Kansas must be more business friendly, remove barriers
  - Define small business as less than 100 employees; medium 100-1,000; large 1,000-10,000; micro < 25
  - Determine what we value the most in eastern/western Kansas and clear away obstacles
  - Government should encourage positive behavior through incentives and credits
- Infrastructure
  - Emphasis on English as common language
  - Government should not be involved in activities such as gambling which are unfriendly to families and business
  - State government must work with local government to assist communities
- Image
  - Kansas was a model when work ethic was referenced
  - Ask rural people why they prefer being in rural areas, this becomes the marketing effort
  - Enhanced quality of life and recreational opportunities will assist western Kansas

**Goodland Cell Meeting – April 26, 2007 – Alan Townsend, Chair**

Participants: Alan Townsend, Joshua Dechant, Jeff Deeds, Shelly Angelos, Doug Sederstrom, Travis Daise, Mike Campbell, Harlan House, Brian Linin, Ron Viguery, Jessica Cole, Gennifer House

- Workforce Development
  - Need a solid workforce
  - Local community college “hub” of training is not as focused as it once was
  - We need to train and keep the labor force in western Kansas
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Funding the community energy complex was challenging
  - Water quality is an asset
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Some young, talented individuals are starting to look to the area for quality of life
  - Idea of attracting telecommuters has some potential
  - Topeka doesn't reach out to western Kansas
  - Rural communities need access to medical facilities
  - The state could provide ways to reinvest in our communities
  - Agri-tourism is an opportunity through I-70
- Business and Tax Climate
  - We must try to grow or we will slowly slip backwards
- Infrastructure
  - Commute time is an asset
  - Access to the world via highways and Denver International Airport
  - Overall the state needs to work together
- Image
  - State marketing plan overshadowed by Board of Education
  - We have a strong work ethic, but viewed as backwards and not progressive

**Great Bend Cell Meeting – February 28, 2007 – Mark Mingenback, Chair**

Participants: Mark Mingenback, Brian Harrison, Bob Roth, Brady Gros, Joe Wilson, Ron Koelsch, Robert Dema, Andrew Murphy, Randy Deutsch

- Workforce Development
  - Effective communication with post secondary institutions
  - Workforce shortages may require “grow your own”
  - Younger generation is mobile
  - Open jobs but individuals don’t have the necessary skills
  - Finding employees is a short-term and long-term issue
  - Education must guide individuals to careers
  - Business has a vested interest in filling jobs, could subsidize education
  - Rural Kansas wages may not be high enough
  - Is there a way to shift the responsibility and risk to the universities
  - Junior colleges seem to be a tax burden on small businesses
  - Advertising to employees at a local level helps
  - Rural Kansas doesn’t have attractions for youth, cost of living is not enough
  - Immigrants are under-trained but hungry for work
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Cheap utilities help communities develop and grow
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Decisions for western Kansas are made from Johnson County
  - Western Kansas is important and needs to be preserved
  - Important that agriculture survives
  - Employee-owned businesses may be an opportunity
  - Urban areas don’t understand agriculture
- Technology and Innovation
  - Online education presents opportunities
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Chamber of Commerce must be the focal point for business needs
  - Commerce programs are friendly, but time consuming and inefficient
  - From a rural perspective, tax changes shift the burden
  - Small victories in tax law help small businesses
  - We do a lot of tweaking to our tax system, maybe focus on 3 or 4 specific issues instead
  - We need an effective way of comparing tax burdens
  - An indifferent tax code would do enough to keep individuals here
  - Reducing taxes overall would help
- Infrastructure
  - Need to effectively communicate tools of the state to local level, state could mandate this
  - We have a high number of governmental units
  - Different mindsets prevent growth
  - Immigrant professionals work Visa’s tend to expire
  - Government should run like a business
- Image
  - Quality of life, family friendly, western Kansas is not about tourist attractions
  - Kansas has a good solid reputation
  - Market Kansas trust and values
  - Most have a negative perception of Great Bend unless they are from here

### Hays Cell Meeting – March 13, 2007 – Jeff Wick, Chair

Participants: Jeff Wick, Alan States, Bryce Young, Earnie Lehman, Gina Riedel, Gordon Pfannenstiel, Jim Circle, Kara Renz, Mike Michaelis, Morris Engle, Pat Parke, Phyllis LaShell, Toby Dougherty, Todd Powell, Tony Poore

- Workforce Development
  - Combine community colleges and technical schools
  - Workforce shortages in nursing, teachers, pharmacy
  - Develop a delivery system for retraining
  - Institutions don't accept each other's credit hours
  - Instructor shortages, wage issues
  - KDOE and Commerce need to work together at a state level
  - Promote an attitude of lifelong learning
  - Grow your own
  - Employees lack soft skills
  - Younger employees use email, text messaging
  - Entrepreneurial education laws at the K-12 and post-secondary level
  - Shortage of qualified employees
  - Sign-on bonuses may be needed
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Seed dollars hardest part of ethanol industry
  - Water shortage is a huge issue
  - Hays is ahead on water issues
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Take pride in your community
  - Smaller communities cannot afford economic development specialists
  - State needs comprehensive training program to take to the field, like Georgia Academy
  - State guidance on succession planning for businesses
  - Community foundations could keep wealth in rural areas, Nebraska is a model
  - Extension agents know what is going on in the area
- Technology and Innovation
  - Attract venture capital to energize entrepreneurial spirit
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Need internal audit of Commerce programs
  - Current programs are confusing, not worth the time and effort required, mixed results
  - New and existing businesses utilize different programs, and this line needs to be clear
  - New businesses doesn't necessarily need tax credits
  - Incentive programs should be based on dollar wages for jobs created, regardless of industry
  - Kansas is a good place to start a business, but not to continue it
  - Competition on a global basis
  - We need a more favorable tax code
  - Incubators can grow businesses, state matches for local funds
  - Mentor youth and small business
  - Financing new business can be difficult
  - Not much seed money available, banking is not venture capital
  - Lower the marginal tax rate and let the entrepreneurs figure it out
- Manufacturing
  - Many programs are leveraged towards manufacturing, a 1970's-80's view
- Infrastructure
  - Streamline government agencies and provide links between agencies
  - Lack of affordable housing or apartments
  - Lack of childcare is a failure of the system
  - Language barriers and immigration issues
  - Need north-south transportation routes
  - On-Track initiatives are important
  - Kansas has a demographics problem
  - Focus on education, transportation, and healthcare
  - Private entrepreneurs have done a better job in Hays than the state would have done
- Image
  - Kansas has an identity crisis
  - Create perception of opportunity in Kansas
  - Many options are not available in small towns
  - A campaign that promotes Kansas in a more positive light, start at the grassroots level and work up
  - Quality of life, limited commuting time, communities, when people get here, the closing rate is good

### Hutchinson Cell Meeting – April 30, 2007 – Dave Kerr, Chair

Participants: Dave Kerr, Jill Ulrich, Mike Pesek, Dorothy Barnett, Ann Bush, Lisa Gleason, Mark Gregory, Bruce Douglas, Allen Fee

- Workforce Development
  - Need to be thinking and positioning our state for the next 25 years
  - Workforce is in short supply
  - Need trained talent with a good work ethic
  - Workforce needs training, but maybe not a 4 year degree
  - Creating jobs and finding a dependable workforce needs to be addressed proactively
  - Attracting white collar workers is an issue
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Wealth transfer from aging population could be a source of investment
  - Need a vehicle for aging population to invest in their communities
  - Community foundations
- Technology and Innovation
  - Expand KTEC across the state
  - Embrace technology
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Need sources of business investment
  - High number of taxing units throughout the state
- Bioscience
  - A means to break into the new economy
  - Need to attract bioscience endeavors
  - Expand bioscience across the state
- Infrastructure
  - Air access still an issue, region has solid infrastructure, Wichita has room for improvement
  - Hutchinson has strong potential with its current attractions
  - Schools and hospitals are a plus for the area
  - Downtown should be enhanced
  - The area needs investments
  - Streamline government
- Image
  - Kansas has an image problem
  - We need to market the state and community better
  - Find a theme and stick with it, each administration changes it
  - Lack of arts, entertainment, and cultural growth
  - Quality of life is an asset

**Lawrence Cell Meeting – April 17, 2007 – Bennett Griffin, Chair**

Participants: Bennett Griffin, Jim Stinehelfer, Steve Mona, Cheryl White, Bob Lagarde, Don Marvin, Matt McClorey

- Workforce Development
  - Aging population is an issue
  - Immigrants may be an opportunity
  - University helps the labor market
  - Youth has the technical skills, but don't want to work
  - Difficult to recruit nationally
  - Working remotely may be a solution
  - Challenge to bring highly-skilled individuals into this area
- Technology and Innovation
  - Kansas doesn't attract significant amounts of venture capital
  - Successes will bring venture capital
  - Clustering around universities would help with commercialization of technology and innovation
  - Research dollars are not effectively utilized at the university level
  - Need to improve the commercialization of our research
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Grow business from within
  - Business friendly state, better than the coasts, but not a major business decision factor
  - Passing business ownership to future generations an issue
  - M & E exemption was a good move
  - As individuals get older, tax structure becomes more important
  - Can make many decisions or use one vision to get to a strategy
  - Create a stronger economic engine out of Kansas
- Infrastructure
  - We need benchmarks and specific measures to achieve desired outcomes
- Image
  - Issues are more image than reality
  - We should tell our story and enumerate on past successes
  - Many issues come back to our state image
  - Need more mileage on image from major businesses such as Garmin, Cerner
  - Need to figure out what our brand is
  - Attracting significant businesses would help

**Manhattan Cell Meeting – March 13, 2007 – Rod Olsen, Chair**

Participants: Rod Olsen, Jeff Levin, Beth Unger, Brent Bowman, Scott Stuckey, Jim Moore, Jo Brunner, Linda Hoeffner, John Armbrust

- Workforce Development
  - Shortages in several industries, nursing, truck drivers, construction workers, welders
  - Construction companies won't expand unless they have qualified workers
  - Low unemployment and an aging population
  - System should identify and match workforce with opportunities and react to business cycles
  - Make K-12 more interactive with business
  - Opportunities for younger workers
  - Wages have increased in this region
  - Work study programs help capture Kansas talent
  - Military retirees are looking for opportunities
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Relative to the rest of the state, utilities are inexpensive
  - Sustainability of ethanol subsidies
  - Need a long-term plan
  - Wind energy opportunities
  - 25 by 25 may not be achievable
  - Conservation, green buildings, mass transit are opportunities
  - Water issues important
  - Motivate through tax credits
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Separate agriculture issues from rural development issues
  - Biggest complaint is there is nothing to do
  - Tourism opportunities in the Flint Hills
- Technology and Innovation
  - Internet provides opportunity to attract professionals to Kansas
  - Poor connectivity is an issue
  - Technology will be a key part of helping Kansas pursue opportunities in a global economy
  - Provide an incentive to pursue technology
- Business and Tax Climate
  - M & E exemption important
  - Tax what we don't want
  - Legislature missed the point on condemnation, eminent domain
  - Liquor excise tax is left on the table
  - Taxes are an issue and not an incentive for business
  - Need a fair taxation system
- Bioscience
  - Kansas is doing good in biotechnology
- Manufacturing
  - New technology and manufacturing techniques may help spur growth in rural areas
- Infrastructure
  - Unique area with military and university presence
  - High cost of living
  - Immigration issues
  - Shortage of childcare may be a failure of system
  - Healthcare, health insurance is a major issue
  - Better infrastructure leads to more economic opportunities
  - Strategically need a state plan for networking and computing
  - Kansas has over-governance and we need to consolidate
- Image
  - Kansas has an image problem
  - Kansas is a good place to retire

**Overland Park Cell Meeting – March 28, 2007 – Tom Robinett, Chair**

Participants: Tom Robinett, Clint Robinson, Mary Birch, Greg Musil, Cindy Cash, Deryl Wynn, Ed Honesty

- Workforce Development
  - Educated rural Kansans move to this area
  - Youth aren't aware of technical education opportunities
  - Workforce development must be demand driven
  - Global workforce shortage is coming
  - Partnership between business and educational resources, similar to JCCC, only at all levels
  - Aging workforce is an issue
  - Immigrants can address some workforce issues, but there are language barriers
  - Fundamentals must be learned in school, not at work, training starts in elementary school
  - Younger generation possesses different skill sets, mind sets, work ethic
  - For worker longevity need to recruit from within and the surrounding area
  - Cost of hiring is high, must retain what we have, provide incentives
  - KIT/KIR programs have limitations and timing issues
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Ethanol and bio fuels may help rural areas
  - State energy plan
  - Wind energy, nuclear power, diversifying our energy portfolio is important
  - Water is a major issue, could be a limiting factor for economic growth
  - Promote energy and water conservation, provide incentives
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Perception that northeast Kansas growing at the expense of rural communities
  - Connectivity would help rural hubs grow
  - Rural development hard unless a regional node
  - Immigration is an opportunity in rural areas
  - Individuals move to where the jobs are
  - Rural development not one size fits all
  - There is little focus on a long-term entrepreneurship plan
  - Define rural
- Technology and Innovation
  - Youth must be approached differently, through Internet and technology
  - Major driver for northeast Kansas
  - Determine best place to put technology to make it a driver for the state
  - Technology is part of infrastructure
  - Internet connectivity gives everyone opportunity to be informed
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Many individuals don't know about all of the programs that are available
  - Marketing tax credits could be an opportunity
  - Simplify and customize our current programs
  - Kansas in the middle regarding taxes
  - High number of local taxing entities
  - Tax issue at the local level
  - Consolidate or die, i.e. Wyandotte County
  - Haven't done a good job of marketing business climate compared to other states
  - Small firms create jobs
- Bioscience
  - Emerging needs include bioscience opportunities
  - Connection between animal health and food safety needs to be linked with agriculture
  - Need to import individuals for these jobs
- Service Industry
  - This area doesn't depend on oil and gas, agriculture or aviation, but is the economic engine of the state
- Infrastructure
  - Identify what Kansas needs to be successful
  - Consolidation is an opportunity and challenge
  - Economics don't drive education
  - More healthcare costs are being passed onto employees
  - Must learn English, don't isolate immigrants
  - Privatizing state economic development programs where aren't available
  - Benchmarking is important
  - Look to other states for best practices
- Image
  - Kansas has the advantage of quality of life
  - Build a sense of community

**Parsons Cell Meeting – March 28, 2007 – Mark Parker, Chair**

Participants: Mark Parker, Neil Martin, Bob Wood, Montie Taylor, Tammie Hawkins, Chuck Sack

- Workforce Development
  - State is losing its more highly qualified individuals
  - Students are leaving after education
  - A significant number of individuals are almost unemployable
  - Some businesses transport in workers from other states
  - Should be a way to partner business and educational institutions
  - Consider programs that link education to a job commitment
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - We need to continue the entrepreneurial spirit
  - The downtown Parsons grant has had a positive impact
  - Transfer of local business assets out of the area is a big issue
  - Local control of business is critical to economic development
  - Recognize what we can and can't do
- Technology and Innovation
  - Communication technology doesn't seem to be a limiting factor
- Business and Tax Climate
  - High property taxes discourage prospective businesses
  - Between healthcare and tax environment, many businesses unable to survive
  - Second tier businesses have to pay for tax abatements and business zone benefits
  - Entrepreneurial programs like WSU's are good ways to start new businesses
- Manufacturing
  - Strong small manufacturing industry in this area, but we need more workers
- Infrastructure
  - Continuing road improvement critical
  - Need four-lane highways to all parts of the state
  - Kansas space and water resource assets
- Image
  - Individuals outside our state have a bad image of it
  - Don't do a good job of promoting Kansas
  - Utilize community involvement as a way conveying a positive image
  - Develop ability to attract individuals

**Salina Cell Meeting – April 12, 2007 – Harry Smith, Chair**

Participants: Harry Smith, Aneta Willson, Dana Morse, Jeff Thompson, Dennis Lauver, Bob Miller, Jason Gage, Craig Stephenson

- Workforce Development
  - Issue more quality versus quantity
  - Low unemployment rates are a problem
  - Competing with neighboring states is just rearranging the chairs
  - Kansas doesn't have the ability to respond to what is needed in the workforce
  - New plants aren't built because of incentives, but because of a qualified workforce
  - Availability of hours an issue
  - Wage creep
  - Workers for the most part have a good work ethic
  - Need all skill levels of workers
  - Low-skilled workers tend to not migrate
  - Allow local areas to put together a model for technical education
  - KDOE and KBOR don't get along
  - School counselors recommend 4-year schools, not technical schools
  - Immigration is a major issue
  - Provide immigrants with a package of what they will get if they locate and work here
  - Get youth thinking about opportunities sooner
  - Individuals come back 2-3 years before retirement because of living costs elsewhere
- Business and Tax Climate
  - There is emphasis on growing existing businesses here
  - Organize locally and focus
  - Commitment, resources, and cooperation for starting businesses seems to be there
  - State doesn't do much to help or assist existing businesses, they focus on new businesses
  - City, county, and airport authority have helped the business climate
  - Need to open the door for economic growth similar to when the military was here
  - Salina economy is diversified and stable
  - The state is business neutral
  - State could play a role in emerging markets
  - Relationship building important
  - When core competencies change, businesses may need state assistance
  - Need to grow entrepreneurship
- Manufacturing
  - Industrialization has not always been a popular issue
  - Airport authority and city were a hook for transition from retail to manufacturing
- Infrastructure
  - Affordable housing is an issue here
  - Reduce the cost of housing site development
  - Solving the housing problem may solve other problems
- Image
  - On an international level, the Midwest is not differentiated
  - If you are not from Kansas, you don't appreciate it
  - Difficult to change the Kansas image
  - Need to market Kansas to youth also
  - We are not marketing our good climate to grow business

## Topeka Cell Meeting – May 8, 2007 – Lucky DeFries, Chair

Participants: Lucky DeFries, Larry Robbins, Martha Bartlett Piland, Quintin Robert, Ben Tenpenny, Bob Evenson, Kevin Doel, Webb Garlinghouse, Mel Chapman, Wendy Well

- Workforce Development
  - Workforce shortages an issue in several areas, including manufacturing, maintenance technicians
  - Private companies have been working with universities
  - Need demand driven workforce development, restructure the system for the best education
  - In primary and secondary schools youth don't have ownership of their education
  - Youth have no work ethic or skills
  - Missing a huge opportunity with smaller schools
  - Parents/students need understanding of existing opportunities
  - Market vocational education and opportunities
  - KATS doing good things and demand driven
  - 10 to 15 years ago decided a better way to make a living than working with hands, now see effects
  - Technical programs at high schools were discontinued
  - Median age of workers increasing
  - No Child Left Behind has been detrimental
  - Business and education need to partner
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Need more alternative fuels, wind, ethanol, biodiesel
  - Tax benefits to pursue alternative energies necessary
  - Regulations are an obstacle
  - Conservation, education, pollution control, incentives part of the package
  - Green building technology will probably require government mandating
  - Define green
  - Need to preserve our water supply so it is available for future industries
- Technology and Innovation
  - Much of rural Kansas doesn't have high speed Internet access
  - Technology must be there to make distance education work
  - Need better communication throughout the state, fiber optics, Wi-Fi
  - Rural areas could blanket towns with Wi-Fi
  - Few providers for Internet, cell service
  - Technology infrastructure funding
  - Either a provider volunteers to provide cell service to rural areas or a 3-year process from the FCC
- Business and Tax Climate
  - May not be possible to get businesses into rural areas, unless incentives like cheap power or a workforce
  - Rural areas have tax shifts, not tax abatements
  - State purchases many things outside Kansas, address with sliding scale preferential treatment
  - Only way to grow economy is to export, encourage this with a tax incentive
  - If we don't get a handle on taxes, will lose a Congressman
  - Need a tax climate where individuals want to stay
  - Cut spending to deal with taxes
  - TABOR not a good idea, takes control from Legislature
  - Some states aggressive with incentives, need to be able to finance incentives
  - M & E exemption positive, Corporate income tax an issue
  - Tax credits are confusing, deal with both Commerce and Revenue
  - Guarantee incentives on the front end
  - Kansas still not a business friendly State
- Infrastructure
  - Certain things businesses look at: transportation, water supply, wastewater handling, workforce, and incentives
  - Kansas turnpike a disincentive for economic development
  - Turnpike encourages you not to spend dollars in Kansas
  - Some Legislators don't understand the concept of economic development
  - Government needs to be consumer and business friendly
- Image
  - Need to change the attitude of Kansas

**Wichita Cell Meeting – April 17, 2007 – Lyndon Wells, Chair**

Participants: Lyndon Wells, Marty Cornejo, Kent Cornish, Les Depperschmidt, Bryan Derreberry, Tom Dondlinger, Michael Germann, Bill Hanna, Joe Johnson, Gary Mason, Michael Monteferrante, Bill Moore, Bill Pickert, Jon Rolph, Kimberly Shank, Lynne Smith, Harvey Sorensen, Sam Williams, Patrick French, KayLene Haug, Kim Young, Molly Edwards, Suzie Ahlstrand, Gerald Holman, Bernie Koch

- Workforce Development
  - Tie K-12 to the needs of the business community
  - Need to tune into potential workers at a younger age
  - NIAR a good example of what can be done when we are focused
  - Industries and businesses will follow the talent
  - We need to graduate more engineers, emphasize math and science
  - There is a generation of technical workers retiring and no pipeline
  - Technical training needs more attention
  - Need more workers
  - Rework the education process
  - Educate immigrants
  - Kansas is a donor state for workers
  - Aviation and healthcare have been working with educational facilities
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Some small communities have tuition forgiveness if you move there
  - We need coordination on a state level
  - Community strategic planning is important
  - Visioneering Wichita
  - Wichita has some of the same issues that smaller communities have
- Technology and Innovation
  - Today's careers require more high-tech training
  - Need more commercialization of research at our universities
  - The state must fund the technical commercialization process
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Chamber has worked hard to maintain and create jobs
  - Tax incentives may provide opportunities
  - M & E exemption helped level the field, still room for improvement
  - State could possibly take an equity position in projects
  - We need to evaluate our current incentives
- Manufacturing
  - Aviation industry is the backbone of this area, but there is diversification also
- Service Industry
  - Trying to build a cluster around the KU Medical Center has been difficult
  - One of the most competitive areas in regards to healthcare
- Infrastructure
  - Affordable airlines legislation was needed, but struggling to hold onto it
  - Reality is some form of subsidy is needed for cost effective air travel
  - Kansas must be coordinated and focused

**Winfield Cell Meeting – February 19, 2007 – Craig Duncan, Chair**

Participants: Craig Duncan, Gary Wilson, Joe Woodard, Robert Tyler, Dick Vaught, Jill Long, Dave Seaton, Sandy Foust, Mike Kelley, Shawn Reniker, Michael Grant

- Workforce Development
  - Businesses need qualified individuals to get the job done
  - Educated individuals leave the state
  - Unemployment levels low, not enough qualified workers
  - Immigration may address some workforce issues
  - We need all levels of the workforce
  - Worker attitude and soft skills are an issue
  - Competition between industry sectors is an issue
  - We spend substantial dollars on education, why not try to keep the employees here
  - K-12 based on college preparation, not business/workforce preparation
  - Some improvements have been made locally by working with the technical school
  - Department of Commerce has some good programs, but excessive paperwork
- Energy and Natural Resources
  - Alternative energy such as wind may be an opportunity
- Rural Development and Agriculture
  - Neighborhood revitalization program in Wellington has been successful
  - Why should we fix older buildings when property taxes will increase
- Business and Tax Climate
  - Workers compensation and injury laws are an issue
  - Border state tax structure differences make it hard to compete
  - The tax structure in Kansas should be more conducive to business
  - Need business incentives to stay in Kansas
  - Property tax is an issue compared to other states
  - Maybe increase consumption taxes
  - Higher Federal fuel taxes may decrease consumption
  - Spending is a problem
  - Bidding on government projects can be difficult
  - More flexibility in workers compensation program
- Service Industry
  - Johnson County is the exception in Kansas
- Infrastructure
  - We should use our centralized location to our advantage
  - Logistics may present an opportunity
  - Cowley County has limited warehouse space
- Image
  - Kansas needs to do a better job of selling the state
  - Kansas has clean air, open space, and other things that are appealing
  - State image is a problem
  - Problems in Kansas are not unique
  - Live here and vacation elsewhere, Kansas is about work
  - Your halfway there